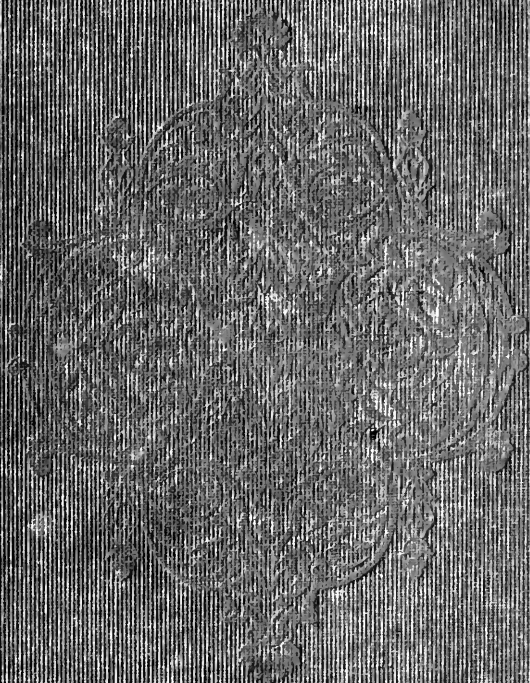


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ANGEL WORLD,

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OTHER POEMS.

BY

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY,

AUTHOR OF "FESTUS."

BOSTON:

TICKNOR, REED, AND FIELDS.

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THE ANGEL WORLD.

It was a holy festival in Heaven,
A joy of satisfaction at the close
Of some divinest epoch of the world.

Far round the infinite extremes of space
Star unto star spake gladness, as they sped
On their resplendent courses ; and a smile,
Enkindling on the countenances of the suns,
Thrilled to the heart of nature, while there rose,
Expressive of divine felicity,
A clear bright strain of music, like a braid
Of silver round a maiden's raiment, all
Imbounding and adorning.

There, in one
Of those most pure and happy stars which claim
Identity with Heaven, high raised in bliss,

Each lofty spirit luminous with delight,
Sat God's selectest angels, gathered round
The golden board of that palatial orb,
In spherul order. All the fruitage there
Of the immortal Eden, and the land
Of everlasting Light to please the sense
And satisfy the soul, the Tree of Life
In all its bright varieties could yield
Was lavished ; and its fragrance filled the skies.
The bright blue wine as though exprest from Heaven
Glittering with life went, moonlike, round and round
Times sacredly repeated 'mong the gods
And spirits who had each one earned his star
In that divinest conclave, as they held
Deep commune on the wondrous end imposed
By the Eternal Saviour of the world
Upon his infinite work ; — and all the harps —
Intwined about with nectar-dropping flowers
Which wither not though culled but on the brow
Or in the bosom bloom as in their fields —
Were trembling into silence, when there stepped,
Unseen before, into the joyous midst
Of that bright throng, surprised in holy ease,
A young and shining angel.

In his air
Sat kingly sweetness, kind and calm command,
Yet with long suffering blended ; for the soil
Of dust was on his garb and sandalled sole ;
Dust on the locks of fertile gold which flowed
From his fair forehead rippling round his neck ;
Bedropt, defiled, with cold and cave-like dew.
One hand a staff of virent emerald held
As 't were a sapling of the tree of life,
And one smoothed in his breast a radiant dove
Fluttering its wings in lightnings thousand-hued,
The sole companion of his pilgrimage.
Silent he stood and gazed.

The angels straight
Rose from their pearly seats inwreathed with gems
And priceless azure from the morning's mine,
And bowed the head and stretched the hand, ere yet
One welcoming word were uttered. Wine and bread—
Bread made of golden wheat — and wine of life —
Such only as immortal virtues use,
Before the guest were set ; and cool white robes
The angels gave him, floating halo-like
With fleecy glistening round his fainting limbs.

Twain of the thrones at once their seats resigned ;
Ministrant Princedoms sang again the strain
Which fills the halls of hospitable Heaven
When that the holy enter, or the sons
Of Light hold high and hallowed festival.

Then spake the cherub chiefest of them all —
Bright Angel ! from whatever sphere arrived,
Supernal and celestial, or some orb
Far off, of starry nature, — for the toil
Meseems, of travel, weighed upon ye erst, —
Now cheerily relieved, — instruct us, pray,
Who here assembled sit to celebrate,
By kind commission of our Lord, His love,
If we in aught thine ends can further aid
Or serve in thine intents, as fain we would.
For all, we know, is holy enters here,
By virtue of our King ; and we, prepared
Again for sacred action, instant are.

Thus he, his seat resuming, while a glance
Of bland approval beamed forth from every eye,
Wise reticence still reining-in each tongue.

Answered the stranger angel, rising slow,
Sunlike, from out his seat of clouded gold —
O kind ! O noble, natures ! well ye work
Your ministry of love, who thus pour forth
Unmeasured, unconditioned, your divine
Riches of works and words, that all who come,
Whether by invitation or by need,
May of the Sovereign's bounty, whom ye serve,
Like honour with His chosen friends, receive ;
Accept these thanks, this blessing ! —

As he ceased,
The air became all incense, and the skies,
As though endowed with native sunlife, showered
Around on all their iridescent smiles.

Oh not to us, rejoined the cherub host,
Be gratitude for duty barely done ;
All honour is our Lord's. To Him we owe
This gracious exaltation o'er the world,
Wherein His love sustains us ; His, who first
By one Omnipotent Fiat breathed us forth ;
Who, out of awful non-existence, us
Translated into life, and turned our souls

To angel constellations, ranging free
Through all the eternal liberties of Light.
But if thou wilt, oh say, most holy guest !
Whom we account us blessed to receive,
While yet the day doth solemnize the skies,
Wherefore thou hither comest, — how treated else
In other worlds, and whither now ; so we,
Haply, may wisdom gather from thy words,
Or help afford by deeds.

Then once again
That radiant youth, immortal as the morn,
Rose from the Crown of Heaven, and bending low
Spake with a soft, bright utterance, like the voice
Of very silence musing ; — so serene
His parlance, and his audience so attent.

O happy angels, heavenly and divine,
To whom nor sin, nor sigh, nor tear, nor woe,
Not even in imagination, come ;
And whose free lives in blest obedience pass
To one law pure, and sole — the law of love —
How shall ye hear, or I relate, the griefs
Of orbs disrupted and of spirits dyed

In blackest sin — of God's high rule reject —
His own deputed, exiled — rudely thrust
From ancient throne and old dynastic calm
Thought steadfast and eterne — and through the blank
Of lifeless night compelled to wander ; where,
But that afar he caught the friendly glance
Of your extreme and most felicitous star,
He might perchance have wandered still ; but since
A gracious ear to stranger's plaint be yours,
Let me, in briefest wise, recount the deeds
Of worlds far distant, wherewithal mine own
Be somewhat, and not wholly dimly blent ;
That ye in joy thus fortified, may thanks
Give for your peaceful lot, and further bless
God, who hath put it in your hearts to share
Those bounties with the stranger, ye enjoy.
To Him be praise and worship in all worlds ! —
Beyond the ken of angels, in the midst
Of a bright ring of worlds, an orb there is —
There is — ah me ! there was — an orb of light,
Once all mine own. In Heaven mine Angel-sire —
Such blest relations are, ye know, in Heaven —
Abode, and ruled in glory many a tribe
Elect of choicest virtues, He Himself

Sovereign and head of all cherubic thrones,
Abiel his name, mine Beniel, known on high,
His sole Son, and ye all are sons of God.
This orb, I, trusted with supremest powers
Paternal love could lend, myself had framed,
Myself with life endowed and loving things,
All life is sacred in its kind to Heaven,
And all things holy, beautiful, and good.
There angels dwelt as in the bosom of bliss ;
Peace, piety, and innocence and joy
Made up the square of Being. Worship was
The very air they lived in, righteousness
The ground they trode and builded on.

A land

It shewed of fountains, flowers, and honied fruits,
Of cool green umbrage, and incessant sun ; —
The rainbow there in permanent splendour spanned
The skies by ne'er a cloud deformed, of hue
Sternier than amber ; while on every hand
The clear blue streams singing and sparkling ran
The bloomy meads to fertilize ; while some
With honey, nectar, manna, milk, and wine,
Fit for angelic sustenance slow flowed.

Here palaces and cities, midst of groves,
Like giant jewels set in emerald rings ;
There, too, the bowery coverture of woods,
Ancient and dense, laced with all-tinted flowers,
Wherein were wont to sojourn in all peace,
Lamb, lion, eagle, ox, dove, serpent, goat,
And snow-white hart, each sacred animal
Cleansed from all evil quality, sin-instilled,
Speaking one common tongue, and gathered oft
In wisest parley, 'neath the sacred tree
Centring each mazy pleasure, intersect
With an invisible bound ; so sweet the force
Of nature, heavenly sanctioned.

All went well

For many a sunny cycle. Year by year
The souls of all things there were ripening fast
To spirit-like perfection ; day by day
Grew spirithood to deathless angel kind —
Angelic nature to Divine estate.
It seemed a happy contest which of all
Should happiest be.

Among that heavenly race

There dwelt two angel-sisters, nymphs divine,

The daughters of the Lord of gods and men,
Star-dowered, light-portioned, forms full realized
Of the Eternal Beauty.

Yet how unlike
Their nature, and their loveliness ; in one
A soul of lofty clearness, like a night
Of stars, wherein the memory of the day
Seems trembling through the meditative air —
In whose proud eye, one fixed and arklife thought
Held only sway ; that thought a mystery ; —
In one, a golden aspect like the dawn —
Beaming perennial in the Heavenly east —
Of paly light ; she ever brightening looked
As with the boundless promise unfulfilled
Of some supreme perfection ; in her heart
That promise aye predestinate, alway sure,
Her breast with joy suffusing, and so wrought,
Her sigh seemed happier than her sister's smile :
Yet patient she and humble.

Of this twain
The elder my betrothed was, to me
In antemundane ages, by my sire,

As of like royal issue with myself,
And seed divine reserved ; yet so disposed,
Of this bright orb the triple herison,
That ere the elder entered on the whole,
The younger should the fair domain enjoy
Of her own chosen portion and delight.
Such the decree forestablished from of old.
Who shall gainsay the will supreme of God ?
For both He loved right well, but for my sake
The first the best, with whom was most secured
The bliss of all.

The younger now had reigned
In meekest wise for many a moonlike age
O'er her select dominion ; and delight
Leapt up its highest, when the news made known
By Wisdom, their high governante, spread abroad
Of nuptials nearing celebration. Vast
And rich in festive splendour were commenced
The sacred preparations : every heart
Impatient for the high propitious hour
When the Bride Queen of their own angel race
With me enthroned should sit, and rule with me.

Midst all this, suddenly a stranger star
Swordlike in shape, as waved by hand unseen,
Far off in space appeared ; eclipsing swift
All lesser, nearer lights which nature shewed.
So rapidly from end to end it flew
Of Heaven's horizon — even as though it scorned
The quiet skies of that ecstatic sphere,
I spake of — that the third night it had vanished
Into the unknown infinite below ;
When to their wondering eyes the morrow morn,
Waked out of darkness into daily light,
A marvel mightier than the sworded star —
Which I alone perceived the Evil one
Had there unsheathed in Heaven where late it flamed —
Behold, was present.

Bands of angels — whence
Was known not — thronged the groves and palaces,
Which decked our paradisal world, in air
And aspect, fair yet foreign, and distinct
Their every action with a shining grace
Which like a lodestar chained, unfelt, the eye ;
And made their loveliness, exceeding far
The holy beauty of the original tribes —

Erstwhile so happy — fatal. For these first
The heart divided, once entirely God's,
Whole and without a flaw ; first tuned their lyres
To angel-love alone, but half divine ;
First taught to separate self from Deity.
Yet seemed they not to teach but rather fled
All serious converse and instruction, soon
Curtailing worship and prolonging rest ;
As though true worship were not union high
With the Great Lord and universal Good,
Worthy of worship ceaseless and by all.

These, after mingling, as by chance or choice
In holy celebrations, when first asked
Their rank to name, and order, made reply
They were the youngest offspring of the Heavens,
Children of bliss and knowledge, richly dowered
With singular joys and rare immunities ; —
That they were spirits of freedom, and their suit
And servage voluntary, whence alone
Budded what little merit they possessed ;
As otherwise their gracious Lord, they said,
Were mocked with forced compliance ; that all good
Sprang from the natural impulse of their souls

And the proud pleasure of pure liberty ;
That they the measure of the skies fulfilled
The complement of all extremes of light ;
Of all celestial essence they the sum,
And after them was nothing ; — which to preach
Of their own selves was their sole business there
Wandering where'er to wander pleased them best.

Like, but unequal, as the eye to Heaven,
Errors the shape of truths put on ; as clouds
The forms of isles and continents assume,
From whence they sprang, suspended in the skies.

With such like words, so falsely seeming true,
And oft-times urged, were many led aside
To question — doubt — deny — at last, cast off
The holy law ordained of Deity
Which makes His love sustaining Spirit alone
The cause and reason of all righteousness,
All peace, all bliss ; freewill the synonyme
Of selfish nature as opposed to God,
Blown up with self conceived deserts, and proud
To prove its own an independent power
Held, in duality, with Him on high.

Vain, foolish, impious thought for aye begone ;
With all things false and foul for ever cease ! —

These, by divine permission, to myself
Such secretly confided, to the end
Which ye ere long shall wot of, presently
Seceded, — yet remained on outward terms
With their unshaken brethren as before.
But oh ! the absolute excellence was gone,
The plane of pure perfection broken through ;
It was as though some galaxy of stars
Had sunk and left a horrid rent in Heaven,
A ragged flaw athwart the sapphirine floor,
A foul chaotic chasm.

Still further spread,
As from some central and impulsive point
In ceaseless radiation, day and night,
Fresh errors, and reiterate wrongs and jars.
In vain I throned myself in judgment hall
Uttering decrees predestined as of yore ;
In vain I walked among them, beckoning back
Such as in false society had strayed : —
In vain I warned of evil ; shewed them all

How God's exterminating judgments fell
Ever on sin, with woe to whom they came.
The testimony came to all in vain.

The disaffection spread. Oh ! still I weep
Recalling that declension, sad and wide ! —

By unsuspected frankness, having gained
Free access soon to the imperial Bride
The strangers next their machinations plied
Against the holy guide and nurse divine,
Immortal Wisdom, 'neath whose bounteous care
Had grown those angel sisters, since their birth
In the arcanest Heavens. Her, soon, alas !
The wily wanderers whispered first away,
From wonted inculcation of deep lore
And holy truths, as narrowing down the souls
And marring the free actions and intents
Of the angelic pair ; to which base cheat
The elder — not the wiser — won too well
By much and false persuasion, at the last,
Gave in nor rued till after ; so mistaught
To gladden at the lack of all restraint
Upon the natural world-commanding will.

Not so the younger, who, with tears profuse,
Grieved at the doom of parting from her guide,
The severance from her holy tutelage,
And losing of the golden words of life
Which her instructress taught her, who instilled
Into her soul the sacred elements
Of universal truth ; and gave to taste,
In prelibation of supremest bliss,
The essence of all knowledge.

God, she taught,
Himself was truth and justice, good and love,
The infinite reality, the one ;
Out of the unknown darkness of the depths
Of His great Being all existence sprang,
In various forms and multitudinous spheres,
Innumerable as the atoms of the light,
Or as the sands Time's mighty year-glass holds,—
Though it comprise all deserts ; that with Him
All nature's vast and elemental limbs
Are but the organs of His will, Himself
Above all bound, above all infinite ;
Whose action is all freedom — whose repose
Necessity — whose only word is Fate ;

With Him alone, she taught, was peace and bliss ;
The bliss of Being is the love of God —
And primal beauty and eternal joy,
Whereof the vital music of all orbs
Forms but the faintest echo ; and the sign
Minutest of His high celestial will
To harmonize creation, and reduce
The pure perennial war of good and ill,
Into the musical peace which rules in Heaven —
Peace, victress of all war. For so, in Time,
The one and many make themselves the all ; —
Beauty the boundless medium, Love the end
Immutable, which renders all things one ; —
And though in outer worlds an outward war
There is, yet in the spiritual world,
The secret harmony of good and ill,
Which Being with existence reconciles
In the mid axis of necessity —
Prevails and hallows finally the whole.
So Wisdom made her favourite wise of heart,
And led the loved one through all holy spheres
And dwellings of seraphic bliss, and homes
Of perfect pleasure — even as the sun
Wades through the golden waters of the world

Up to the top point of the tower of Time,
Then steep descends — down to the lowest nook
Of furthest space, where earth spins round like clay
Upon the potter's wheel, the orb where bode
The last of happy beings, and the first
Of wretched creatures — semimortal man —
Whose clay was tempered with a lymph divine,
The ante-natal wave of Paradise,
And fourfold fount of nature's heavenly flow ; —
Yet so self hidden in the cloud of sin —
So misadvised by those whose souls perfused
With earth-pent vapours and the reek of time,
Falsely oracular sit and agonize,
Preaching perdition — that though high in Heaven
The sunsmile of Salvation beamed, it beamed
Unrecognized — unrecked of — undivined.
Still after all these wanderings, knowing well
One single soul more wondrous than all worlds
Which mass the skies with miracles of light,
They rapture most and sweet contentment found,
Coolly triumphant, like the restful stars
Glowing in Heaven when Time's hot day is done,
Each in their proper orb and common sphere ;
To meditative converse most devote,

And strict collation of the Spirit-book
With the pretemporal volume, writ of God ;
High in the archives of eternity
Treasured, the pure original of Life.

The elder Excellence, meanwhile, who longed
For pure and mere autoocracy, unchecked —
Unled — uneyed — ruled with a random hand,
And an occasional sovereignty the all
But full totality, allotted her,
Of the original myriads of her race.
These loved her well ; and, willingly, themselves
Ascribed to her for ever, for that she
Gave them all freedom, wherefore in return
They were her slaves in gratitude : and ripe
Any desire to grant or scheme abet,
Which pleased herself, or those intent to please.

Counsel, however sage, and precept fair,
Which seemed to savour of superior will,
Or tendency to better ends than theirs,
Were treason held at last, and Wisdom's words,
Bewrayed by guile, into a net were wrought,
For her own shining feet ; — alas, the day !

Long was a pretext sought, and baffled oft ;
But never failure followed ill intent
And base success still sealed each fatal plot.

The hour of parting came, and Wisdom wrung
Her high uplifted hands — nor breathed — unless
To her she loved, that youthful saint — farewell ; —
Which well she wist were but a mock to make
Of valediction. How could that she left,
By any chance, fare well ?

Yet still she stayed,
Lingering around that once supremest sphere
Where, with the sister angels of her care,
In days of holy innocence and love,
She was of Eld so happy. Oft she made
For flight, but pausing, dropped ; and thus consumed
Her last night there, till every star had waned
Into the coming light ; and then her way
Upon her own bright wings she took to Heaven.

The vanishing flash of her æonian wing
Called forth a burst of triumph from the train
Of those insinuant tempters, as they marked —

What close in deep divan they long had hoped ; —
And toward the elder of the angel twain,
Those regal nymphs, inheritors of Heaven,
Laden with crown and robe and sceptre, rushed
Tumultuous — and applausive, hailed her thus.

Be thou our Queen, O lofty angel fair !
Worthy the sole and unobstructed rule
Of every sphere and every spirit race ;
Heart-honoured — Heaven-ordained — predestined heir
Of the bright line of ages numberless !
Since God, creating atoms, first began,
And ended with this universal world,
Thou hast beheld no equal, nay no like.
Thee only we acknowledge, and for this,
Hold our arrival blessed. Empress, hail ! —

Then she clate, and with pride-blinded soul,
The towering seat, prepared for her, assumed —
And sat a sceptred monarch.

Far and wide
The tidings flew that I and all my rule
Were thrust aside ; and in the judgment seat

I sat and none attended ; or but came,
With false fictitious cause, to scoff and jeer.

Then came an edict of perpetual ban
And forcible exile 'gainst myself, and all
Who dared the fallen fortunes to support,
Or but to name as lawful. Thus the sword,
Whose fiery emblem glared at first in air,
Reigned and divided all things. Every gate
Of every temple straight was closed — and lo !
Each high and heaven-allusive dome was filled
With hollow sounding emptiness alone.

Once — in the midst of their assembly high,
And in the palace hall, where erst were held
The courts of joy and audiences of love, —
Once I essayed to speak and hearing hoped.
But, ere a word, they bound me by the hands,
And drave me out with curses, taunts, and gibes.
Passing, thus manacled, the new made throne
Where sat the crowned traitress, of her crime
Conscious, and trembling 'mid the array of state
That girt her in, brightly, I spake ; — but not
In anger nor revenge ; for I foresaw

The wretched end of all such mortal sin,
And knew the holy purposes of Heaven
Alone eternal and essential good ; —
Behold me thus ; I quit thee ; 't is thy will.
Me thou forswear'st, who had loved thee more
Than all the tribes of angels, love thee still,
Despite the flatteries wherewith now thy soul
Is darkened and degraded. Know me true
The hour will come when thou shalt hold me yet
Dearer than now detested ; but 't is thou
Shalt change, not I. Watch, for I come again.

She answered with a smile, but trembled whilst :
And I departed that unhallowed hall.

In this, too, God permitted them success —
And in far more, that at the close He might
'Their highest height o'ertop, and with the arms
Of love, all-conquering, fling forth more supreme
His thrice victorious standard. Such His will ;
Such, even in exile, now, the due, the dear
Obedience of my heart ; for well I knew
'To change, or re-create, with Him perdured
As facile as to make.

The younger angel maid
Who dauntless kept her faith, and still with me
Held sad and sacred commune — though by stealth —
Was suffered to remain, close cloistered first,
In solitude religious, for that they
The Empress' mind who swayed, dared not advise
To put her quite to death ; and that the tie
And natural sympathy of sisterhood,
The memory of the excellent times of old,
And flickering purposes of future years
Which played about the heart of her enthroned,
Together, wrought to spare her and preserve.
Anon, though bidden to busy herself alone
With her own matters and those mixed with them—
She, at convenient times, permission wrung
To walk abroad and tend her charities ;
But only in the humblest, homeliest guise.
And as the Queen had shrunk not to abjure
All past — all present — and all future love,
Between her and myself — her whilom Lord —
The younger in derision, they who mocked
Both, called the Bride Expectant and the Spouse.

Now, what a change came o'er that orb serene !

Through all the day was revelry and mirth —
No respite knew the night, till no one recked
Of natural order or of dues divine.

While the neglected damsel at the gates
Of her imperious sister — at whose beck
All luxuries started into life and use ; —
In servile garb, and oft with ashes crowned
As in contempt, an outcast sat forlorn.

O ! royal menial — O ! imperial thrall —
Companion of the angels in their height !
How lowly art thou fallen ; and yet how pure,
Seen in the sin consuming light of God —
How meek — how perfect in all servitude ! —

These contumelies and worse, unvexed, she bore
Unheeding, uncomplaining. Day by day —
Her to impress with due sense of disgrace,
Was she led in, before the obsequious crowd,
In sackcloth clad, to make obeisance meet
Unto the Sisterly Majesty, which she
Coldly, for peace-sake, made ; nor all hope lacked
That some few gold-grains Time might number still
Among the barren sands he measured forth ; —

That Wisdom yet might wonn with them again
And her usurping sister, still beloved,
Though for this deed condemned, her seat resign
To the divine dynasty. In this
Hope she survived, nor wholly stood alone.

While all — almost — in that strange change of rule
And law agreed, a certain few there were
Nathless, within whose hearts the echoes staid
Of those last words I uttered ; and these found
Joy unconceived in hoping still they might
In act be verified ; and oft — as best
They could — they comforted the angel child.

Daily and nightly, she, upon her knees,
Besought God to rekindle, in the hot
And blinding darkness of her heart who ruled,
The lovelight of His presence, and to quench
The desolating river of their wrath —
Who first infested that fair world with sin.

At night too, in the wilderness we met —
For what was once a garden shewed but then
A drear and desert wold : and there from her,

The woe of saintly innocence accused —
The purifying suffering of sin.
Yet such — although they knew not this — that both
Should vanish, and good only and pure joy
Encrown each other finally. In all
Worlds there are truths and secrets only known
And justifiable, to Him who laid
Their sure foundations ; trembling though they stand
Upon the countless columns of the air.

By secret instigation thus the heart
Was poisoned, of the Angel Queen, to shun,
And doubt her innocent sister. Time by time
Such imputations cast, failed not to work
Wrath in the royal breast, though reckless all
Of former love, or future. 'T was enough
So proud presumption were but whispered round ;
Thus visited.

Within the central square,
Fronting the glittering palace, stood the throne —
Which changed so much the aspect of that orb,
And which I told of first — whereon each day
She, ministering blind justice, sat absorbed

In love of her own empery ; rapt to hear
The adulation of her foreign train ;
To trifle with her sceptre as a toy,
And court the rainbow flashes, startling bright,
Of the star-gemmed tiara ; to her eyes
Jewels well worth the satrapies of Heaven ; —
Rich in all fancied virtues to attract
Good, or from evil fend ; the which same gems
She oft would deftly moralize, and prove
To the subservient glozers ranged around,
How well they did become her, how much stead,
The breast, the brow whereon they dazzling lay ;
Now gleaming forth defiant, now reposed
In silent capabilities of light.

There, in her radiant siege, that angel Queen —
What time the Sister, so abased as wont
Meekly came forth in pale humility,
Low bending like the crescent moon, when first
Born of the golden calm the western sky
Rejoiceth in, prophetic, to perform
Due reverence — sat, and eyed askance ; then spake ;
While o'er her head attendants from behind —
Pavonian canopy of azure held,

In manner of a sunshade, her to screen
From the high glory that would else have slain : —
Fair-seeming Sister, is it true that thou —
In my default — aspirest to espouse
The angel prince, my sometime lord and lover,
He exiled, thou in bonds ? If so, content.
Ye well befit each other, and so far
As merits make, are equal, in my mind.

Answered the younger of the twain divine.

O heavenly consort ! — O affianced bride
Of God's own Son ! Be there 'tween thee and me
Nor struggle, nor misdoubt. They both malign,
Who sow the seeds of discord broad-cast here.
We each have our forenoted lot. Be mine —
The power, the privilege of servitude.
Be thine, command. My faith can never change.
But thou hast fallen from service to a throne —
Though he who ever loves, nor swerves from that
His heart hath fixed on once — with me consort,
It is but for a season, and our talk
Is of thee always. Countless prayers are thine.

I, too, have my devotions, and serve God
Doubtless, although I worship not with thee,
Replied the elder, bowing from her throne ;
We worship each our star, but all in Heaven.

We may not worship but the Invisible ; —
Answered the younger, firm.

No matter, now ;

Rejoined the angel monarch, smiling bright
On her confederated beguilers round :
Who smoothly sanctioned every pearly word
That beauteous and imperial rebel spake ; —
My temple is my heart. My seat is fixed
Here in the midst of friends ; and by this crown —
Each gem a sacred talisman of power,
Or amulet protective from all harm, —
Wrought by the spirits of the elements
And wondrously endowed, — I swear, and be
The oath, as death, irrevocable — I,
The dull alliance ye design abjure.
Nor Lord, nor living equal shall be mine.
Depart, and let him know our fixed resolve.

Incipient murmurs of applause ran round
The lustrous throng — when lo ! an omen strange.

While yet she spake, the jewels of her crown
Erewhile obtested, in the sight of all
Dropped, several, down, — a sadly splendid lapse
Like meteor showers autumnal in the skies, —
Whose fancied virtues in her false esteem
Were that which made her royal ; down they fell
And but enriched the dust.

With deep dismay
She eyed the empty sockets — and was still.
Stricken with shame, too, slowly slid away
That parasitic court.

The younger, then,
Who at her sister's feet her seat still sought ; —
O Sister ! O divine one ! O most dear !
There is a jewel more than worth all these —
These but the shining rubbish of a wreck.
Wilt thou not seek it ? 'Tis, for asking, thine ; —
A friend there is — a lover — one most true,
Who would not thus desert thee, though it had been

Thyself, by judgment, hurled into the dust —
But there he would have comforted thee.

No more !

Said the haught Empress, I have cast my lot ; —
Then hurried from her throne and disappeared.

Next came the crime of crimes with curses crowned,
Staggering precipitate. No lack was there
Of direful sign and portent ; chief was this —
Each day grew murker, for the light of truth
Suns those serenest firmaments ; and all
The falsehoods each one uttered, lie by lie,
Rolled into rings of darkness round their heads —
Till the conglomerate gloom obscured the day,
And each one so infringed the other's view,
That contact in collision ceased. And still,
With gathering shades the stranger spirits grew
Still lovelier, and, like light outletting flowers,
Glowed in the lengthening eve ; and oft at night
As the stars streamed their silver radiance forth —
Alternating with azure and all gems —
Or as in nacrine blent in one soft blaze,
Their rosy bowers they trimmed ; and training low

The honied wreaths, heavy with odorous dew, —
Warbled a vesper song, inviting mirth
And amicable converse in the shade.
There likewise they averred to serve their God —
Whose living emblem dwelt, they said, among them —
With natural worship and symbolic rites
Of souls regenerated ; there impart
The esoteric truths which nature veiled,
Of the one triplicative essence ; there —
All cosmogonic and theurgic lore,
Without consideration, open free
To the enraptured eye — and but for one
Prostration of the spirit duly made,
The sacred fire and secrets of the stars.
Night after night these proffers were proclaimed —
And mysteries more enchanting still, with smiles,
Hinting of happier revelations yet,
When those they loved were perfected in faith.

These smiles at first were answered but with smiles,
Incredulous, rebuking. See, said they,
In impious invocation of that doom,
How the night lengthens we have brought with us ; —
Permitted to this end, that out of night

And preternatural darkness such as this,
May spring that luminous vision we enjoy,
And in ourselves create, of things divine.
Partake ye with us. Thus they tempted on.
Wonder at last awoke desire.

Among

The original seed angelic, was a sage
Of dominant lineage — for undated years
Prime counsellor of good — who oft had urged
Obedience, and reproof on all who erred
In listening to the promissory guests,
One wasted atom, even, of an hour —
And most deplored their advent. Him it seemed
Good to the Great One — who controls all life,
And circumscribes all action, so to prove
His further ends superior — to permit
One moment's fragile converse with the spirit
Chief of those voluntary visitants,
Who lay reclined on fragrant flowers, as though
Dreaming, yet only half dissolved in sleep ; —
The radiant chaplet drooping, and the zone
Cærulean, featly tricked with semblant stars,
Unloosened for repose.

Arise, he cried,
Sternly. And wherefore ? said the angel guest ; —
In wise and happy idlesse, half divine,
Those live who how to spend their life know best ;
Our rest is contemplation : worship our
Sole work. The weak alone unceasingly
Devote themselves to action ; but for us,
We mightiest are in rest. This eve return —
And I will show thee that we worship here.

What more, in speech, hath never been divulged ;
But neither was it much. Away he turned —
His heart assaulted by a storm of thought.
The day he passed in musing and in prayer
Repeated, but unsatisfied. At night,
When all the stars burned brightliest, and the bowers
Of song were silent, he in stealth returned —
And lo ! the Spirit slumbering as before.

O ! sweet and soft salute of sacred sleep —
The starry eyes, and lightning lids of earth,
And evening, slowly sealing, and the cheek
Of angel painting with a pearlier calm ;
How wert thou mocked then !

Morn came, and he
Returned not, — poor apostate ! Soul by soul
Who went to seek him stayed ; so strong the spell,
One dread defection cast ; in every bower
But that wherein he was, 't was said he hid ;
And soon each flowery canopy one concealed —
The proselyte of idols — slave of self,
Who was to seek, but never to be found.

Pity them, now, ye angels ! for, like you,
Equal — almost — in favor of their Lord,
Were once those lapsed ones. These are heart-wrung
tears.

At these words, sympathetic tears swam o'er
For the first time, from each celestial eye,
As trees autumnal shed their leafy tears
In golden showers, shaken by sudden gust ; —
Tears not to be forbid.

In saddest tone
Resumed the Heavenly Stranger his discourse.
Ne'er to be found, I said. But who can find
A limit to the mercy of our Lord ?

In like estate they never may be found —
They never shall be ; still, for all is hope,
Hope — the immortal virtue of the saints.

But let the time-glass of their sins run down,
Whose recollection whelms me still with woe.

Not many darkening days had passed away
Before the mighty mysteries stood revealed,
And strangest aphanisms, one by one,
Of those once loved and honoured most, made clear.

Beneath the shade delicious of a wood —
In whose Elysian glades those strangers fixed
At first their dwelling, and therein prepared
Their secret rites and sacred mysteries —
Skirting the gold sands of the sapphire sea,
Were those deceived assembled ; so deceived,
The day they weened was longer, brighter, now ;
And each the other hailed as happier then
Than in the ages past. Forth flashed the song
Upwards like earth-born lightning, and the dance —
Of crystalline symmetry — skimmed around the shore,
In vortices of light ; the world-queen there

Now mixing with the mirthful throng, now sole,
Seeking in thought repose. Oh ! this, they cried,
Is joy — the bliss of liberty.

At once

That senseless dream to dissipate, lo ! there rushed,
Out of a cave, with toppling crags o'erhung,
A hugeous monster, such as never Night
With murderer's mind engendered, when his heart
Lay panting underneath the conscience pang —
Like fawn beneath a wolf's jaw. Dragonlike
In lengthening volumes stretched his further part,
Incalculably curled ; but in the front,
On one wide neck a hundred heads he reared,
Which spake with every mouth a hundred tongues,
Through teeth of serried daggers black with blood
The breath he drew in day he breathed out night.
And he descended to the sea to drink,
Though close by his cave a cool bright river ran ;
For it was thirst the monster better loved
Than aught that thirst could quench. The abhorrent sea
Shrank backwards, tide by tide ; but he pursued,
Triumphing in its fascinating fear,
Into the very midst ; — then gorged, returned,

Soul-sodden to the shore, where prone he lay
Before his horrid hold ; with stormy joy
Gnashing his steely teeth, and with his tail,
Now close contorted, and now far out launched,
Sweeping the shiny slime of the wide sea sands.

In still and dreadful wonder, grouped by fear,
Astound and awestruck stood the duped allies
Of the delusive strangers. Ceased at once
The choir-maze astrœidal ; shouts of joy
And gratulation, all ceased.

First to speak
Was one, the last who lapsed from pure estate.

Be this the god ye serve ? — The god ye swear
That we should this day see ? — Our god, said they.

And are we bound to adore him who have passed
Through your mysterious rules, and on us ta'en
His worship by the oath of fire ?

Ye arc,
In tones of hate, replied the spirit chief,

By whom that wise one told of, late, was lost —
There standing as the hierophant of hell ; —
Behold, ye are before him — bow the knee.

And the vast monster smiled ; on every face
A hot and lurid smile — like the red light
Which hovereth o'er the earthquake yet unborn,
Though quick. Oh woe !

When all — such answer made
As heretofore recorded — with remorse
Were smitten, and repentance, and aside
Turned them to go ; — the hierophant exclaimed,
Give to the mighty one his victim due !

Then those destroyers seized the angel youth
Who first recanted his accursed oath,
And cast him at the monster's feet, which cried,
No more of these ignoble victims ; hence !
Bring me the royal bride, and I depart.

Soon as these fearful words were heard, lament
And consternation seized the greater half
Of those there present — and most base resolve

Filled up like molten lead the others' hearts.

Which cruel purpose when the sister-queen
Saw — to that living idol, fierce and foul,
She knelt, and touched with natural sorrow, him
Besought the child to spare.

Take what, she said,
Take all though wilt, but leave alone this one —
My sweet and sacred sister. She with me
Once in the happy past, and innocent, lived
A pure perpetual blessing ; from her hand
Came boundless bounties ; not a word she spake
But seemed a benediction ; her bright heart
With lovelight glowed, forever at the full.
In days of old o'er all the orb she ranged,
And reigned where'er she ranged. All things rejoiced
In her ecstasie advent. By her touch
The thrall a throned prince became ; the dead
Dawned into life ; o'er all things spread the spell
Of her resplendent presence. That they touched
Her very footsteps gladdened, as the waves
Leap into light and vanish in a smile.
But now — because of deeds thou know'st too well,

Deeds, peradventure, for repentance meet —
Immured, she lives the life of charity
In the still precincts of her holy home,
With many a lovely handmaiden around
In starry palace templed, till the hour
Of our celestial nuptials, as she deems,
If sorrow have not wronged her reason — come.
I, her rebukes of love have oftentimes borne
And scorned, and heaped upon her infamies,
Which she hath thrice forgiven; but let her not
Be out of life abolished, who hath done
Such good, and been so harmless at the worst.

Thou speakest as the she-fool only can —
Retorted then the angry terror; rise!
The very reasons thou dost name for life
Are those wherefore I hate her unto death.
Go! thou thyself shall bind her to yon rock,
Or I will slay ye both. His tongue then ceased
Its frightful thunder-clang, nor spake he more.

Meanwhile, those basest few who thought to win
The tyrant monster's favour, and preserve
Themselves from fatal end — death-threatened now —

Sought out the sorrowing maiden, and disguised
In borrowed robes of cheerful thanksgiving,
Entered the heavenly sanctuary wherein,
At the high altar ministering she stood,
Presaging sorrows soon to be fulfilled ;
Predicting woes accomplished while foretold.
These, in mock worship mingling with the rest,
Yea even in mine own presence — for in her,
'Midst all these woes, did I sole solace find —
Her, sudden, seized and bound, and hurried off
To a lone sea-crag, circled by the sea,
And, for the monster's evening victim, left.

Then vowed I to deliver her from her foes —
And for the rescue armed. The lightning steed,
Which pastures on the air, and is the sign
Of the divine destruction of all worlds, —
The sparkles of whose hoofs, in falling stars,
Struck from the adamantine course of space,
Stream o'er the skies, — in swift and solemn joy,
Came trembling at my call. A lance of light,
A sunbeam tempered in eternal fire,
I in mine hand assumed, and forth we fared.

Wide o'er the waters rose a wail of woe
With a fierce shout of exultation twined —
For chained to a dark rock, rough and high, the sea
Was loathly yielding back to land, — there stood —
Arrayed in Paradisal purity
Alone, that meek and innocent angel-maid ; —
The monster wading greedily through the waves,
Her to devour ; — the angels, some aghast,
Exulting some ; her sister as half-dead
Fell fainting from her seat ; the light alone
Of falling stars, with blinks of lightning mixed,
Lamping the red horizon fitfully.

Midway between the rock and the sea we met ;
And though the creature bellowing would have fled,
And have defiled the eye of light no more,
Yet was I there to slay as well as save.
The lance of light I couched ; and straight my steed,
Who knew instinctive all his dread devoir,
Drove on like an inevitable storm ; —
The weight behind propelled the point before
Through the whole monstrous mass, till in the heart,
Quivering it stood, triumphant. Down then dropped
The soulless corse.

The beauteous captive's bonds
I, instant, burst, and wrapped her sacred limbs,
In the same robes I wore — of golden web
And azure wove ; for forth I sped at first
Of conquest confident, mine armour dight
With trophies rich besecming such event ; —
And on the rock where long she swooning lay,
Though conscious she was saved from direst death,
I laid her, perfect in pure loveliness,
And in that garb of glory.

Then there came
A voice, as of a star-cloud in the sky,
Approving, and all blessing I had done ;
Formed, too, beneath the cloud, a rainbow bright ;
From whose arch, falling as in circular wind,
And in diminishing spires, this bird of light,
The sign and augury of peace divine,
God-missioned, hovered round me for a time,
Then nestled in my bosom — as ye see.

But not so from the orb, where still remained
Those recreant spirits, who, with loud lament,
Wept their extinguished god ; him to revive

Striving with all their strength. In vain they strove.

Now, lest the venomous vapours of his corpse
Should the whole sphere impest, it was decreed,
By crown alike and lieges, all alarmed,
To offer to the soul of the dead beast
His body as a solemn holocaust ; —
Nought else like worthy of such sacrifice.
With a vast mass of pompous rights, the Queen,
In sordid robes of false humility,
And all her proudest subjects, head declined, —
In mournful train, upon a mighty mound
Upreared by the seaside, the heapy corpse
Of the terrific slain laid out ; — and balked
In their last complot, lo ! another seized
Their souls — instinct with hate more murderous still —
Mine own destruction.

Me, where I remained,
Protecting her I honoured, they approached,
Beseeching I would witness the last rites
And public incremation of the dead,
In proof that I with them was reconciled,
Ere they for aye departed.

This I did —

Knowing full well their most recondite sins
And secretest intentions ; they the while
Unknowing wholly mine.

No sooner came

I to the seat, in right opposal placed,
To that despotic empress, than they urged
Me to revivify the hateful frame —
The incarnation of that fleshly hell,
I had, for her sake whom I loved, destroyed ; —
But once for all their quest refused ; whereat,
The throned one brake her sceptre in her wrath,
And cried, — have done with him ! I own him not,
And have forsworn him. Let him die his death.

Thereto I answered not — within myself
Secretly praying but that God would make
The spirit fair concordant with the form,
And what was beauteous, lovely.

They forthwith —

Tempter and tempted hating me alike —
Rushed on and bound me fast ; no sooner bound, —

Than from the Heavenly Father of us all,
All power I felt transfused into mine hands :
Yet let them work their will, that all might be
Accomplished in their nature, and the great
Designs of God fulfilled which He sole knew.

Three days and nights, or rather one long night,
But by diverse degrees of darkness marked,
Again it died, in foul offensive fumes
Exhaled away ; so vast that carcass grim ;
Around whose molten mass, too, the whole time
Were fierce and bloody combats, tribe 'gainst tribe,
In honour of the dead one, till at last,
Me on that burning and abhorred bier —
That carnal hell impersonate, all fire,
Remorseless cast they ; and their sin-palled eyes
Perceived not that a Heaven-sent cloudlet caught
Safe in its soft, cool bosom ; there create
By love divine of God, that mercy might
The dear decrees of judgment execute,
And scathless free the Being bound and doomed.

High upwards rose, then, in Heaven's darkening face,
Wide wavering from innumerable tongues,

Like to the desert sand-cloud or simoom,
The columned execrations of the crowd,
But far below me swept ; they neared not e'en
The prospect of my feet. Such malice grieved —
How grievous to the soul of love, all sin !
Yet need more made they should be won to God.

Thus praying, I to the rock returned, where lay
Entranced that lovely maiden of the main
And stirless, still. Her straight I raised and bore,
Gently and lovingly, within these arms,
To a lone star as yet unblessed with life,
Which round a larger and exterior orb,
The central mirror of the world, wherein
Are shadowed all things past and yet to come —
Rolls restless in the Heavens, that so she might,
Awakening, see new cause to bless her Lord.
There, all enchanting, she enchanted lay ;
Beheld of all, beloved of her kind ;
I, guarding.

Meanwhile, in that wretched orb
Prevailed continuous night, and all things died
That drew their life from light ; the flowers their life

Breathed out in incense, and the trees laid down
Their leafy crowns, forlorn ; the herbal earth
In withered, barren, senseless nakedness,
Lay like a clayey corpse.

How changed from that bright orb
The rolling skies had erst rejoiced to see ;
Whereto the orient sun was wont to send,
As to some eaglet orb that loved the light,
His earliest beam to wake the welcomer ;
Signal to all of worship ! Now, alas !
Cloaked in impenetrable night it glode
A black abomination through the skies,
A reptile world abhorred of all and shunned.
Then fire was used for light, and each one bare
With him a pitchy torch which reeked of hell ;
Supplied by those deceptive guests who now —
Their doubtful shapes resumed — incited strife,
Commatural hatred, war ; and ground to dust
The victim of their mystic mockeries,
With wrongs elaborate and self torturing sins.

She who, so prompt to rule alone, had deemed
Herself a Queen for aye they laughed to scorn,

Deposed and dungeoned, chained as mad — and slain —
But that their hate preserved her. There she lay,
In wretchedness repentant, wrecked in soul ;
Scarce floating on the ages. How she longed
Then, for her sister's voice — and hoped 'gainst hope
For other accent than her own lone lips
Re-echoed from the walls that confined her ; —
For one embrace once prized beyond all price !
But such desire as yet might nought avail.
Be sure the Great Perfector hath well earned
All that He gladdeneth over, as His own,
Throughout the threefold world ; though Him it wrought
Measureless dole, for the Divine is born
Ever of bitterness ; and well I ween,
Where sacrifice is not, is never fire.
There lay the stricken despot humbled down
Into a penitent angel, sad and meek.

Bright city, hallowed temple down were razed —
Nay, e'en their deep foundations rooted up ;
The sacred groves were fired, and tree by tree,
Charred into naked blackness ; all the soil
Was grisly ashes only. Day and night
The skies rang with the cries of myriads' woe,

Till the stars shuddered, and the orb was shook
Wherein I watched the awakening of the maid.

Close by her feet, insculptured, on the couch
Whereon she lay, was seen a child who held
An hour glass in his hand. Ten times it turned
Upwards and downwards ; at the twelfth it fell,
And falling broke ; and as it fell, she rose ;
Rose, like a lily bending o'er its stem,
Gently until she stood.

And hark, she cried,
Beloved ! hearest thou not that wail of woe ?
I know it, whence it comes. Oh let us hence
Hasten, and Heaven beseech to save, to save !

Then stirred the dove divine, imbosomed here ;
And I obeyed its impulse as of God,
From whom it came ; and calling to my side
A cloudlet — like a silver swan that sailed
The deeps of air — we clasped its snowy down,
And swiftly winged our way ; — till drawing nigh,
Again, that dark apostate orb, the tears
Of my beloved one fell like raindrops down.

Thus moved, I said unto the air, be fire ;
And to the waters, be ye flames ; and straight
It was so ; for it seemed but meet to purge
The sanctuary in this wise, so defiled.

From side to side, from end to end, it burned,
From pole to pole it blazed — from sea to sea ;
Till, in the central city of that sphere,
Now shining ruins only, from the height
Of one immoveable mountain monument,
Forked like a double pyramid, which sole
Survived the splendid wreck, was spied, far off
On the horizon, the unbroken ring
Of round beleaguering fire, which, swift as thought,
The nations all into one death-doomed flock,
Relentless, hunted.

Midst this fiery woe, —
Struck suddenly, as out of vertical space, —
Once more the blazing swordstar shewed in Heaven ;
Which many, fearful, deemed, if brandished then
By the same hand as first, would cleave in twain
Their self accursed sphere, and hurl its dust,
With them, for aye, into the deadly void.

Near and more near on waves of light it rode,
Swiftly triumphing, and with blinding beam,
Till full above the centre of the orb —
The conflagration of the sphere self-quelled,
As though in presence of a mightier power —
Slowly descending, it alit at last,
And upright stood ; — no more a flaming sword,
But sunbright cross ; 'neath whose redemptive light,
And restorative radiance, all the seeds
Of life leapt upwards in the face of Heaven.

There now it stands, and all who will, may live,
Seeking its light. Alas for creature will !
The darkness and the light still stand opposed,
Ceaseless, as is the war 'twixt good and ill,
Which win and lose eternally in turn ;
While these vivific globules, stars y'cleped,
Roll through the veins galactic of the heavens ; —
So long as lasts creation.

Go, I said, thou pure
And selfless spirit ! Take thou this golden key, —
Which saying, I from out my bosom took
The true and triple key of all the worlds,

Which nought may let ; which opes whatever can
Be shut, and shuts whate'er be oped ; which turns
The wards of Heaven's own gates of solid light,
The portals of the palace of the Sun —
No eye create shall else behold ; — and placed
In her pure palm. This take and ope, I said,
The prison wherein she groaning — dying — lies.
Restore her to the vital light. Strike off
The manacles from her hands ; and from her feet
Loosen the gory fetters ; in her wounds
Pour thou the oil of peace, and wash with streams
Of living waters. Clothe her with thyself
As thou art clothed. Oh cheer her heart with hope
And inspiration of thy faith, and say
I sent thee to redeem her. Tell her, still,
My love hath never altered ; not in grief, —
In passion not, not in disgrace, nor guilt ; —
Howe'er inconstant her heart, or opposed,
Her love I with an everlasting love ; —
The one am I unchanging ; — what beside
Thou wilt, for thou canst only utter truth.
Go ! and may He who over-orders all,
Speed thee upon thy quest.

She, wordless, went,
But looked her thanks — which seemed to promise full
Accomplishment of precept — on a wind
Wafting herself away.

I, who, while all
That dark defection reigned, had warned in vain —
Now having seen in recompense most dear
Heaven's own eternal standard planted there,
As in all orbs, triumphant ; and once more
By this dear monitor, this God-gift moved,
That sphere to quit ; — first in myself resolved
The mighty stream of Time to pass, which bounds
And separates the realms of sense and soul
From Heaven's eternal spirit-land, that I,
Might to the sire of all which live, present
For all, the supplications of my heart ; —
And that the prayerful love of that bright maid
For her beloved sister, might receive
The seal of God's acceptance.

On this high
And arduousest emprise behold me bound ; —
Yet, ere I left my cloudlet car, whence late

I marked that world-wreck, once again I gazed
Thitherward, and beheld before the gates
Of a half-buried palace — black as death,
Its marble portals — locked in blest embrace,
The well-beloved twain.

A voice then spake —

The voice of one joy-hearted, soft and clear
As bells at early morn, on that blest day,
Named in the breast-laws of each starry orb,
Wherein Eternity entwines with Time
Its golden strands, and weds the world to Heaven ; —
Arise ! come forth, beloved sister, rise.
How blest am I to serve thee, to release !
Nor doubt, nor wait. Behold thy handmaid me.
Gifts bring I for thee, gifts of countless price —
Of priceless worth. Thy lover Lord commands
Array thee for the bridals. Lo ! the new
And shining robes, by heavenly fingers wrought, —
Fit for the form divine of her whose love
Is hallowed in the eternal rites of Heaven.
So shall we dwell together here in bliss,
Till He shall come who ever comes to all
His promise sanctifies. Improve the hour

Which yet remains, in all obedience clear ;
And deck thyself in weeds of righteousness,
With jewels of good deeds adorned, and clad
In golden garments redolent of praise.
For infinite is every gift of His
Divine bestowing ; and Salvation's cup,
And Nature's, He to overflowing fills.

With joy I heard — I saw. Nor longer then
Awaited, but where most the starlands crowd
The potent north, soared upwards, space by space,
And firmament by firmament of stars,
Leaving in turn behind ; passing unharmed
Upon the verge of Being, where the path
Narrows to almost nothing, the monsters foul
Earth-dust and Death-night — things ye know not of —
Yet fatal beasts to all who, me before,
That way had urged. But God hath favoured me.
And nigh thereto, the Golgotha of worlds —
The charnel-house of Time — where skull-like orbs,
Extinct of life, with rotten, sickly light,
Defiled the purview, and advance delayed ;
Yet shrinking nought, though shuddering, passed I on,
Through all uncleanness, clean, all foulness, pure.

Hungered, athirst and faint with fasting, still,
My purposed way I held, till bright afar,
The kindly radiance of this angel world
Beaconed me hither — and I came. Ye now,
Thanks for your holy hospitality,
Behold me journeying to the city of God,
There to prefer my prayers, and plead for those
Whom still I love, though drawn aside to trust
The natural strength allotted them, and not —
With sole reliance — GOD ; who thus to all
By failure e'en of angels, when He wills,
Asserts in all, His high supremacy.

Let whoso feels in holy will inspired,
Me to accompany, speak — to that bright throne
Where GOD, our Father, in all glory sits,
The world in holy audience at His feet ; —
And there with me, while giving praise for all,
His word hath made and saved, for those not yet
Redeemed, pray ceaselessly.

Uprising then
As 't were a constellation, suddenly,
Seven of those gracious angels pressed around,

Eager for friendly escort ; when the chief
Cherub who welcomed first that pilgrim bright,
Thus said ; — Another holy day, made blest
By our dear guest — how different he from those
Deceptive friends he tells of ! — hath now slid
Into the passive strength-restoring night ;
Rest also ye.

Such is mine own intent,
Replied the eloquent guest ; and less for that,
These life-tried limbs have gone through, than their
sakes,
Who know not half the flight they meditate.

Then worship before rest ; as was the wont
In every alternation of the day,
Ere action, or refreshment, or repose.
Last, on their happy couches, odorous all
Of flowery incense, lay the angels down ;
Shading their faces with the plummy gold
Of their space searching pinions ; sacred sleep
Stealing the starry wonders of their eyes,
And with divinest visions hallowing all.

Morn, like a maiden glancing o'er her pearls,
Streamed o'er the manna-dew, as though the ground
Were sown with starseed ; — and the angels rose,
Each from his hallowed couch, and — duly made
The sole oblation of the heart to God —
Stood ready for departure ; taking leave,
For a brief space, of their beloved compeers ;
With many an ardent longing for the way,
As yet untried — 'neath such sweet leadership.

At length the last embrace, last look, exchanged,
High upward the bright bevy, like to light
Out of the crowned north, — shot ; on and on,
Through firmamental fields of furthest space,
Till at the brink of a vast river they,
Arriving, halted, which pervaded Heaven ; —
Swift as a cataract, yet unbroken, still
And level as the mean line of the sea.
Thick with chaotic matter and unformed —
Like the volcanic blood which bounds unseen
In veins of lightning through earth's cavernous heart —
Mid ruined orbs, like broken ice-lumps, rolled,
Melting and crumbling, to the ocean deeps
Of vast eternity, it gushed along.

Its depths were darkness self ; but every wave,
Which curled out of the mass, seemed light alive,
Though but an instant.

On an eminent height,
Which overpeered the stream, the angels sate.
Then said the angel leader to the rest,
What see ye past the river ? And they said, .
We nothing see beyond. Athwart this stream,
If stream it be — and not a shoreless main —
Is more than we can ken.

But I, returned
The questioner, see beyond the clear bright land
Of Heavenly immortality, mine own
By birthright and by gift ; and thither, we.

Descending to the shore, he stooped, and dipped
Into the stream his hand ; which filling full,
He tasted, and thus spake. Ye waters — once
Of death — but now of life eternal, take
Back the libation I have made of ye ;
And be ye changed for ever. Uttering this,
He cast the dark remainder in the flood,

That instant changed into a flood of life,
Flashing with light celestial to its depths
Of bottomless infinitude ; — and straight,
Grasping the bright branch of an olive tree,
Which bowed with verdant gold the peaceful shore,
He therewith sprinkled, one by one, the band
Who him accompanied ; with these pure rites
Making them free, initiate into Heaven,
And death the lesser mysteries of life.

The solemn marvel of these gladsome deeds,
Each heart lit up, with self-evolving joy.
And round him all stood linked in one embrace.

Behold, he said ; for fit it is that now
We keep our course ; and close below there lay,
Moored but a little distance from the side,
A crescent-boat, translucent as a star,
Wherein they all embarked, in godly dread.

If lightning were the gross corporeal frame
Of some angelic essence, whose bright thoughts
As far surpassed in keen rapidity,
The lagging action of his limbs as doth

Man's mind his clay ; with like excess of speed
To animated thought of lightning, flew
That moon-horned vessel o'er life's deeps divine ; —
Far past the golden isles of memory
Where only names exist and things are not ;
Mingled wherewith a cloudy counterpart
Mocks every islet, and therein are lost
Those upon whom the bright seductive sea
Smiles wreckful ; and sincerest smoothness feigns.

They went, they knew not how. It was as though
The finite, mingling with the infinite,
Produced an utter ravishment and sense
Of o'erabundant reason. At the last,
Heaven's azure shores they made, and leapt on land.

Scarce had they touched that land of life, when lo !
From every footfall, like soft waves of light,
A murmuring music sprang, as if its own
It welcomed to its bosom, with soft joy
Rejoicing inwardly. The sacred soil,
To this premortal music vibrating,
The same which Faith hears in the still of Time —
Their chief saluted ; kneeling, likewise, they.

Then he embraced them all and each in turn.

Here let us build, said he, a tower of light ;
That all upon the further side may know
We have in safety crossed the flood. Himself
Placed the foundation-stone, and one by one,
Masses of dazzling adamant which starred
The shining shore, like flowers that fringe the banks
Of woodland brook, they piled up altarwise
At his command. On every stone engraved,
In gleamy darkness, was the name of God ;
For every star a stone ; and every name
A separate title symbolizing love.
A sheaf of lightning on the head he placed,
Which with the skies innate communion held,
And burned in correspondence. Thus was all
With the pure blessing of perfection crowned.

Their journey called them on ; and pleased they trode
That land of solid concord ; yet not long
The lower line of progress kept. Aloft
Once more they stretched the light-related wing,
High in the face of Heaven's eternal towers,
Which still immeasurably distant shewed,

Of soul enkindling brilliance, and a power,
Light-uttering splendour, that at first appeared
Enough to quench their lesser beam. But this
As they approached them strengthened, and enlarged,
In heart and effluence. Whilst the happy seven
Were marvelling at such change, inwapt in thought,
Lost in the labyrinth of boundless love,
Self-humbled by the glory on them poured,
They found that Heaven was close to them ; and they
The shining basement of the walls had reached
Of the celestial city, which did itself
Enclose, or seemed, the essential universe ; —
And standing by the glowing gate of prayer,
About to enter, missed their stranger friend.

In holy wonder lost, still greater now,
Each to the other turned, yet nothing spake,
For silence sealed each tongue. But straight on high
A voice spake for them, saying — Enter ye,
For I am He who led ye hither ; I
Who lead ye still, the Son. Then rushed on all,
Like eagle swallowing up its streamy way,
The whole mysterious truth. And they obeyed
The word magnetic, the divine constraint.

They entered. All was silent. One sole voice,
Through the serene eternity of Heaven,
Streamed upwards towards the Ineffable ; — nor harp,
Nor hymn, nor breath beside ; nor thought, nor hope
Of all Creation, but therein was bound.

Father, He said, I pray for all the worlds,
Whom Thou, by these creating hands, hast made,
And linked with mine. Though fallen they be by sin,
Through trusting in themselves, and not in Thee,
Let not imperfect nature, tried by Thy
Perfection, their eternal ruin prove.
Rather let me that glory I partake
With Thee, to them dispense, that Heaven's pure light
The darkness of the world may clarify,
And Time, impregn'd by Thy pure Spirit, bring forth
Divine eternity ; death's bitter flood
O'erpast, the pure regeneration come
To all life, saved and sanctified to Thee.

He ceased ; and, issuant from the eternal throne,
Came like a cloud of light, the bright response,
The Godhead in expression, uttering love
In laws more broad than light, which thus were known.

Son! for Thy sake I make the world mine own ;
For Thy sake hallowed, and in Thee redeemed,
The universal life exempt from sin.
That love which founded first the skyey stars
Shall see no bound, and so be satisfied
With sempiternal ingrowth. World on world,
The illuminated missal of the skies,
'Thou turnest, leaf by leaf, in turn shall close.
Thy spirit only, which Thyself hast poured
Into the worlds of life, shall live for aye,
And in this presence, as the angel man,
Acknowledging his Lord and Thee his love.
In everlasting union all shall dwell
With Thee, who giving up the joys of Heaven,
And union with the One, for life disceipt,
And spheres of shining sadness, madest Thyself,
Sinless, a perfect sacrifice for sin.
Therefore in Thee shall sin and death be sanctified.
And flesh made spirit, human nature made
Divinity, vice virtue, and earth Heaven.
As in creating light, is night destroyed,
So every bodily organ shall be changed
Into a spirit-sense ; and human power
Into divinest faculty ; each fault

Into a pure possession and stronghold.
Behold ! the worlds Thou prayedst for, all are Thine ;
And that in chief I gave Thee, recreant once —
To bliss restored and glorified in grace,
Made happier and diviner far than first,
'The earnest of the harvest of the skies ; —
Behold it at Thy feet : the creature lures
Of mystery and idolatry, become
Pure faith and simple worship ; the blazing sword,
Whose firebirth of incendiary sins
Wrapped at the last in pitchy flames the orb
Of stainless beauty, so created — now
Transformed, the fateful mysteries of the cross
Foreshadows and confirms. Lo, there it stands ;
And all thou prayedst for, perfected ere prayed.

God said ; responsive silence caught the words,
And hid them in her heart, as night the stars.

Glowing and sparkling in the life-rayed sun
Of the celestial firmament, glided up
On pinions wide of playful lightnings poised,
That sphere Elysian consummate in bliss.
And all the angels thereto bent their gaze

As stars in nightly council watch the earth.

Then looked and saw, three paces from the light,
'Midst of that pure and renovated orb,
Beside the gardened bank of a bright stream,
A fair and lofty lady, clad in robes
Of seagreen hue, engirdled with a zone
All variously tinct, and round her brow,
Encrowned with peaks of quivering fire, a veil
Of heavenly azure. In one hand she held
A tower, and in the other hand a tree.
Sat at her feet a melancholy maid,
Pale, perfect, and serene, between whom passed
A mutual smile of sympathy and trust,
As though their lot were linked ; yet knew they not
How, nor the invisible presence of the Heavens.
These, as they both intently eyed, at last
One to the other spake. Sweet Sister, mine,
Sleep thou, and let me wait his coming sole.
Me He expects to watch, but would not thou.
Thereon, that lovely lady laid her down
Below a rock, whereby, in woods embowered,
And scented with all flowers, the river flowed, —
Her last words, watch ; in sooth, He will not come

Or not to me, who wrought him so great bale.

And the sun set ; still watched the maiden meek,
And at midnight she prayed.

My Lord, my God !

Thine is the Spirit which commands and smiles ;
The soul which serves and suffers ; — Thine the stars
Tabled upon Thy bosom like the stones
Oracular of light, on the priest's breast ;
Thine the minutest mote the moonbeams shew !
Let but Thy words come true, and all are blest ;
Be but Thine infinite intents fulfilled, —
And what shall foil the covenanted oath
Whereon the mounded earth is based ? — and lo !
The whole at last redeemed and glorified.

While thus she prayed, Heaven looking on, came down
From His eternal heights the Angel-God,
Upon whose breast the sun blazed ; and He stood
Between them ; and the lady rose all pale ;
But the mild maiden gladdened in her heart.

The Angel took the maiden by the hand,

And said, O thou who watchedst and hadst faith,
What shall be thy reward ?

If I, she said,
Have done well, 't was from reverence of Thee
And love of Thy divine love ; she, alas,
Being infinitely worthier of Thy heart,
Predestined from the first to Thy bright breast,
Than I the thousand virtues to proclaim,
Which own Thee Lord for ever. What though sin,
Serpent-like, fanged her, and she fell, I knew
That Thou by touch couldst heal her, and Thy power
To do good equally by Thy will to do,
Whose love is world-wide. Were there due to me
Of guerdon aught, it should be still to serve
And dwell with both for aye. Be, then, to her
The vow performed first promised, and let my
Betrothal, Lord ! in her espousals end.

Then whelmed with gratitude, the royal dame,
In all her bridal beauty cast her down
And clasped her handmaid's knees and wept aloud.

But her the Angel raised and dried her tears,

With His serenest smiles, and blessed them both.
Come ye with me, He said, beloved come !
The handmaid's faith hath saved the mistress throne.
Be one my sister, and be one, my bride ;
Each than the other dearer, more divine.
The world's wide doomring is the land I rule,
My home is Heaven, and mine inheritance
Both shall enjoy, predestinate of God.
The Father to the Son gives all in Time,
The Son restores all in Eternity
Unto His Sire ; and I myself to Him.

Then, one by either hand, He led them up ;
This, with the holy presence and august,
Most like the mother goddess, city crowned,
Now tiar'd as with the towers of Paradise ;
That, with the lucid crescent on her brow,
To the high seats of old prepared for both.

And all the angels and the spirits blest,
They who had erred, and they who taught to err —
Along with those, who wise and pure withstood
Temptation, yet now wisest, humblest were —

Dwelt in that sphere, concentric with the Sun,
Which ruled the skies supernal ; and they passed
Upward and downward as best listed them.

And Wisdom passed amidst them, like a thought
Among a gladsome circle. And the face
Of all the orbs was changed. Then, too, was seen
The great unveiling of all mysteries,
Creation glorified : in childlike calm,
Lapped in the mantle of eternal rest.

The jubilant song swelled circling through the courts
Of everlasting joy, like a round wave,
Till it suffused all life, and touched the stars
On the unlimited eye-line of pure space.

Smiled the Eternal Son, who can alone
Behold the Invisible and Heaven then saw,
Reflected in the face of Him Divine,
Born of the Light as eye glance of the Eye,
The unseen likeness of the Ineffable One ;
Each like the other as the sky and sea,
Imbosoming the imaged Infinite.

The Son Eternal smiled ; and from his throne
Stretched out the hand of blessing o'er the world ;
And blest it was — for ever — blest it is.

THE RETURN.



THEY come, from the ends of the earth,
White with its aged snows ;
From the bounding breast of the tropic tide,
Where the day-beam ever glows ; —
From the east where first they dwelt,
From the north, and the south, and the west,
Where the sun puts on his robe of light,
And lays down his crown to rest.

Out of every land they come —
Where the palm triumphant grows,
Where the vine overshadows the roofs and the hills,
And the gold-orbed orange glows ;

Where the olive and fig-tree thrive,
And the rich pomegranates red,
Where the citron blooms, and the apple of ill
Bows down its fragrant head.

From the lands where the gems are born —
Opal and emerald bright ;
From shores where the ruddy corals grow,
And pearls with their mellow light ;
Where silver and gold are dug,
And the diamond rivers roll,
And the marble white as the still moonlight
Is quarried, and jetty coal ; —

They come — with a gladdening shout ;
They come — with a tear of joy ;
Father and daughter, youth and maid,
Mother and blooming boy.
A thousand dwellings they leave,
Dwellings — but not a Home ;
To them there is none but the sacred soil,
And the land whereto they come.

And the Temple again shall be built,
And filled as it was of yore ;
And the burden be lift from the heart of the world,
And the nations all adore ;
Prayers to the throne of Heaven
Morning and eve shall rise,
And unto and not of the Lamb
Shall be the sacrifice.

HYMN OF THANKS.



THROUGH pain and through peril, temptation and harm,
We are saved by His love, for the Lord lent His arm ;
By the sea's bounding wave and the blue river's rim,
As the morn grew up bright, or as eve came down dim,
By the cliff and the beach, and the mountain's bleak
brow,

We have knelt — for we felt — then, and ever, as now ;
By the stones of the street — or the green valley's sod,
Was the light of the Lord, and Thy Glory, O God !

From the strength of the storm and the grasp of the sea,
And the lightning's red wrath, Heaven ransomed are
we ;

From the arms of the forceful, the wiles of the base,
We have turned to Thee, Lord ! and Thy comforting
face ;

In the courts of the Idols we thought on Thy power,
And shrank not, nor bowed in the terrible hour, —
Our life, and our all, at a savage's nod,
But were saved to Thee, Lord ! and Thy glory, O God.

By fountain and garden, and palace and grove,
Where the gay and the beautiful gather to rove ;
Where the vine o'er the violet flourishes green,
And the roses fill up the soft season between ;
Where the temples are worthy of God to behold,
And the altars are blazing with jewels and gold ;
Wherever we travelled — or voyaged — or trod —
Was the light of the Lord, and Thy glory, O God !

A U T U M N .



'Tis Autumn — and the winds are high
And storm-clouds scud across the sky ;
The yellow groves on Dee's dark side
Grow paler each approaching tide,
As though they feared the rising waves
Would sweep them to untimely graves.

No flowers are now with dew-lit eye
To lure the light breeze loitering by ;
No roses shed their rich perfume
From hearts just hid in sweets and gloom ;
But barren stem and withered leaf
Are all that 's left for love and grief.

Behind yon hills which fence the west
The sun sets on the sea's wild breast ;

Not as in summer time he went
A warrior to his crimson tent,
While all the glory of the world
Stood waving like a flag unfurled
Around him, as the bright one bowed,
And laid him on a golden cloud ;
But wan and weary, sick and dim,
He dies, and Heaven seems nought to him : —
So glares the dying on the dead,
Stretched upon battle's gory bed.

The clouds, carcering swift on high,
In continents o'erspread the sky ;
And mists come reeking up the plain,
And pattering quick the chilling rain,
And sullen Moël Famma shrouds
Her column-crownèd head in clouds.

From Grosvenor's woods are falling fast
The leaves beneath the loosening blast ;
Yet lovelier now those groves appear
Than in the noontide of the year,
Where crimson blends with deepest green,
And brown and amber glow between ;

So sunset hath the richest sky,
So saints look happiest as they die.

The floods are flowing, and the Dee
Rolls black and swollen to the sea;
Yet still by fits that haunted stream
Flickers beneath the moon's pale beam,
Like a face smiling through a dream.
And mine, a stranger's footstep falls
Round my ancestral city's walls,
Beneath the steep sharp-slanted shade
By moonlight from the minster made —
In silence, for no soul is nigh
To brave or love the storm but I.

THE RING.—A BALLAD.



THUS to a fair Venetian maid,
The proudest of the train,
With which the Doge went forth arrayed
To wed his vassal main,
“This very day,” her lover said,
“Will Venice go the sea to wed.”

“Now tell me, lady, what to do,
To win this hand of thine ;
I’ll risk both soul and body too,
For such a prize divine.”
“I’ll have the bridal ring,” said she,
“Wherewith the Doge will wed the sea.”

Came forth the Doge and all his train,
And sailed upon the sea ;

The banners waved, and music's strain
 Rose soft and heavenwardly ; —
And blue waves raced to seize the ring
Which glided through them glittering.

The lover through the bright array
 Rushed by the Doge's side : —
A plunge — and plume and mantle gay
 Lay lashing on the tide ;
He heard a shriek, but down he dived,
To follow where the ring arrived.

He sought so long, that all above
 Believed him gone for aye,
Nor knew they 't was his haughty love
 Who shrieked and swooned away.
At length he rose to light — half-dead —
But held the ring above his head.

The lady wept — the lover smiled —
 She had not deemed he would
Have dared it, — was a foolish child —
 And loved as none else could.

“Take it and be a faithful bride
To death,” the lover said, and died.

The lady to a convent hied,
And took the holy vows,
And was till death a faithful bride
To her Eternal spouse.
And then the ring her lover gave
They buried with her in the grave.

TO THE TRENT.



OF all the rivers in the land,
Thee most I love, fair Trent,
For in thy stream and by thy banks
My happiest hours I've spent.
'T was there, hard bye, I first drew breath,
There hope to end my days ;
And every where I'll tell till death
My native river's praise.

Oh ! Shannon hath a wilder shore,
And Thames a richer freight,
And silver-linked Forth is banked
By more baronial state ;
But neither hath a purer wave,
Nor deeper, stiller stream ;

'T is quiet as a grassy grave,
Or a saint's dying dream.

Let me, in sunshine or in storm,
Still linger by her side ;
I'll alway look on her with love,
And speak of her with pride.
By rock and mead, and grove and isle,
She goes from deep to deep ;
I love her in her dawning smile,
And in her sunset sleep.

And when she riseth with the rain,
And bringeth forth her flood,
And sweeps up to the high town's foot
Her spoil of field and wood, —
I love her more than ever then,
For then she hath her will ;
And over mounds and herds and men
She bears the victory still.

May such a calm triumphant course
To sacred souls be given,

That, river-like, though born on earth,
They image only Heaven :
And tending ever towards the light,
In this their earthly race,
Meet, mixing with eternity,
In joy, their Maker's face.

AN ANCIENT LEGEND.



A stone stands in a rustic town
Which once the neighbouring hill did crown ;
Nigh to the house of God it lay
Before 't was set where now it stands,
And how and why there, graybeards say,
Was ne'er the work of mortal hands.
But list, and ye eftsoons shall know,
From runes translated into rhyme,
How saint and fiend would have it so
Far back within the olden time.

That holy church stands fair and free,
Those festive bells peal merrily,
As well they might and still they may
On many a bright autumnal day,

When both in hostel, cot, and hall,
They hold the village festival.

The godly rustics on that day
At church had met to praise and pray,
And thank the Giver of all good,
Through Him that died upon the rood,
For harvests stored and daily food ;
And as saint Wilfrid's care they claimed,
Oft in their prayers his name was named.

At morn, at noon, at eventide,
Their task the merry ringers plied,
Pealing each time with joy increased
A welcome to the rustic feast.

But it roused the wrath of the fell fiend,
As high o'er minster-fane he leaned,
In the dim glooming of the day
Blent with the moonlight's silvery gray.
Quoth he, " I hate that holy peal,
Yon festal church my wrath shall feel."

He said ; and from the stately lands,

Whereon the high cathedral stands,
He heaved a huge gray granite stone
Erst as a Druid's altar known ;
And lifting it between his teeth,
And three times scanty drawing breath,
Wide on the air his arms he spread
And dropped it on the minster's head ;
E'en as an eagle drops a hare
Brought for her callow younglets' fare.

Upon the main tower straight he stands,
And as he glanced o'er field and fell,
He weighed the weapon in his hands
And took his aim and distance well ;
And when the moon's last glimmering ray
Died on the tall church spire away,
Three hours he gazed it through the dark,
Nor winked his eye once on the mark.
As midnight tolled, for mightiest then
Is all demoniac power o'er men,
The rock he raised — Foul fiend forbear ! —
And hurled it hurtling through the air.

Saint Wilfrid, from his seat above,

Where with the blest, whose deathless days
Are passed 'tween deeds of sacred love
And their adored Redeemer's praise,
Cast on the house of praise and prayer,
The object of his hallowed care,
One glance, and marked the missile fly
Midway betwixt the earth and sky.

A momentary prayer he made ;
And there the mighty mass was stayed ;
Aloft in air the altar hung,
As moveless as before 't was flung.

Then spake saint Wilfred : " Baffled fiend,
What evil can from Heaven be screened ?
Though in the depth of midnight thou
Didst ween to crush yon pile below,
Yet know that to celestial eyes
Divinest daylight never dies,
And saints defend the things they love,
As God protects the saints above.
While men invoke their holy names,
And on their prayers for succour call,

So long shall saints fulfil their claims,
So long their shrines shall never fall."

He ceased ; the air-arrested rock
Fell earthwards with a harmless shock,
A long half mile beyond the bound
Of the good church's hallowed ground.
The Demon, balked, made off in rage,
And the stone slept for many an age.

And still — a startling sight I ween —
The foul fiend's teeth-dints may be seen ;
And still, though gray and wondrous old,
The stone itself is never cold,
But keeps within its fated form
A gust of the fiend's fire-breath warm.

LONDON.

I LOVE thee, London ! for thy many men,
And for thy mighty deeds and scenes of glory ;
For all great thoughts and things into thy story
Drain themselves — of the heart or hand or pen.
I love thee in all hours : the most, though, when
The busy heart of universal man
Seems throbbing through thee, without pause or plan,
Yet, haply well, to God's all loving ken.
Thou art the greatest thing on the earth's face
That man hath made ; thou art what man can do.
Look on it, Lord ! and greaten it with Thy grace.
Hundreds of shrines therein are Thine ; — too few.
Let the world worship God ! ye cities, bow !
And last and lowest, thou, proud London, thou !

A R U I N .



IN a cot-studded, fruity, green deep dale,
There grows the ruin of an abbey old ;
And on the hill side, cut in rock, behold
A sainted hermit's cell ; so goes the tale.
What of that ruin ? There is nothing left
Save one sky-framing window arch, which climbs
Up to its top point, single stoned, bereft
Of prop or load. And this strange thing sublimes
The scene. For the fair great house, vowed to God,
Is hurled down and unhallowed ; and we tread
O'er buried graves which have devoured their dead ;
While over all springs up the green-lifed sod,
And arch, so light and lofty in its span —
So frail and yet so lasting — tis like man.

A F R A G M E N T .



As in a round wide view from some tall hill,
Central and isolate, it happeneth oft
The furthest things on all sides eyeable
Are village temples tapering to the skies,
Be such, too, the horizon of the soul ;
And every ultimate object, unto Heaven
Calmly aspiring, indicate its end,
And sanctify the limits of our life.
For as, in gentlest exhalations, earth
Breathes forth the glistening steams which high in air
Glow, sunlipped, into clouds of rosy gold,
Or seek again her breast in fruitful dew ;
So of our aspirations and desires,
Might we endow the skyey calm of life
With retributive blessings, and a clime
Of love create about us bright and boon ;

An everlasting spring of holy good,
And venerable beauty. But, alas !
Men breathe forth passions which fall back in blights,
And stormy desolations, that defile
The sky-born streams, and flood life's fields with woe.
The evil in our nature we can act
Always and utter ; but the inner good
Hath inexpressive boundlessness. Earthlike,
Each carries with him his own atmosphere,
Or pure or foul, where'er we orbitate.

LOVERS.



THE rose is weeping for her love,
The Nightingale ;
And he is flying fast above,
To her he will not fail.
Already golden eve appears,
He wings his way along ;
Ah ! look, he comes to kiss her tears,
And soothe her with his song.

The moon in pearly light may steep
The still blue air ;
The rose hath ceased to droop and weep,
For lo ! her love is there.
He sings to her, and o'er the trees
She hears his sweet notes swim ;
The world may weary ; she but sees
Her love, and hears but him.

A M Y T H .



APOLLO laid his lyre upon a stone ;

The stone was seized with music ; and the touch
Of mortal could awake the god's own tone

For ever after. Marvel ye not much.
Wherever God may choose, or man may dwell,
This is an ever acting miracle.

When once the gift of Godlike poesy

Hath touched the heart, it answers everything
In its own tongue, but with a harmony

Instinct of Heaven. Let the world, then, fling
Its arms of honour round the Poet's breast,
And Heaven may hear Earth's music, and have rest.

MORNING.



I.

SHE comes! how lovely are her smiles,
The ever glorious morn!
Up from old Ocean and his isles,
Her rosy chariot borne
By the winged steeds of Light,
Spurning far the shades of night;
While Darkness gathers round her head
Her heavy wings which late lay spread
Wide o'er the sleeping world;
She quits her throne; she flies away —
She flings up her usurped way —
To shame and exile hurled.
Thus, Falsehood, fly, in that blest hour,
When Truth takes up for aye her long lost right and
power!

II.

The goddess beautiful and bright !
 She waves her hand on high,
And straight the Sun pours forth his might
 And splendour o'er the sky.
The wakeful lark now leaves her nest,
And bears to Heaven the guileless breast ;
The eagle rushes strong from rest,
To meet and prove his burning gaze
Upon the Sun's congenial blaze,
 And steal his golden hue ;
Above the sphere of earth to soar,
Till e'en the native cliff no more
 Points to his piercing view ;
Hail, mighty winged creature, there
May none thy high dominion share ;
King of the trackless, sightless, boundless air !

III.

And hail, Aurora ! still by thee
 Our mother Earth's caressed ;
And in return we worship thee,
 Yea, all pronounce thee blest.

Lo ! they come from greenwood bowers,
Bands of maids with fresh-culled flowers ;
To thee no death doomed lamb they bring,
Nor burned, nor blood stained offering,

 To deck thy turfy shrine ;
But swiftly, gaily, borne aloft
By healthful breeze, thy favours oft

 They tell, thy name divine.

Oh ! grant their prayers, inspire their praise,
While unto thee their pure and thankful chant they raise.

IV.

Fair Morn ! though light and fleet thy stay,
 Though brief, thy brilliant smile,
Yet balances the frowns of day,

 The world's great woes, and wile ;
Worship of self and gust for gain,
And all the rudeness of that reign
Which worldly usage doth maintain.

I dearly love to look on thee,
For thou an earnest art to me
 Though short thine earthly stay,
Of time to come when woe shall die,

And vice and falsehood both shall fly,

Oh happy, holy day !

Then shall the just soul heavenward borne,

Leaving the dust garb it had worn,

With holy passion hail Immortal Morn !

A MYSTERY.



FRIEND ! many a year hath passed
Since last I clasped thine hand —
It may be we shall meet no more
Till in the Heavenly land ;
Still grief can ne'er erase, nor joy
Eclipse, the bliss hath been ;
And us one ceaseless, burning thought
Still oscillates between.

And yet another name there is, —
The fates ask always three —
With thine, dear friend, and mine conjoined,
In endless unity ;
Yet all are severed, as by death,
At destiny's command ;
And though a thousand read these lines
But twain shall understand.

P R A Y E R .



YEA ! even here as everywhere, let man
Worship his Recreator, and the world 's
Made perfect by preliminary fire.

O Thou, who in the inaccessible depths
Dwellest, of all central Being, and of whom
We can see but the star dust of Thy feet,
Left on Heaven's roads ; from world, nathless, to world,
From firmament to firmament, can we trace
Each soul his individual link with Thee ;
The pure invisible touch which makes us Thine,
The something more substantial than the sun,
More general than the void, yet nested here,
As through the airy silence of the soul
Swifter than eagle rushing on the wind,
Thou sweep'st into possession when Thou wilt.
So many are Thy mercies there is nought

But this to pray for, left ; — Continue that
Thou givest ! To cease pertaineth not to Thee.

The elements may all confusedly fail,
And burning systems stiffen or depart
Into their graves of darkness and decay ; —
The Sun, at length, exhausted in the strife
With his ætherial victor, sleep and die ; —
And firmaments conglobed them, till at last
The universe concentre in one orb,
Fit for Thy footstool only. Change like this
Ten thousand times may happen, till it fall,
To the observant spirits at Thy right hand,
Noteless by re-occurrence ; Man, the while,
Restored into the essence whence he came, —
One with the great ones who have dwelt in him, —
Who cannot deal with less than infinities,
Nor utter what is not divine and true, —
Shall ripen in Thy bosom till he grow,
Through endless Heavens triumphant and serene,
Into the throned God thou badst him be.

H Y M N .



Who shall commemorate all Thy chosen names
Thou who art Sire at once and Son of man ?
Servant, friend, brother, bridegroom, husband, Lord,
Priest, advocate, physician, teacher, guide,
King, conqueror, and master, world-adored !
Owner of all things here, and almoner ! —
Thou the Divine Protagonist of time,
The everlasting sacrifice ; the world's
Eternal victim, Thou, and victor God !
On high the light of all perfections, here
The blessed shadow ! Sun of righteousness,
And star of wisdom, lonely in the Heavens ! —
The cloud of glory in life's wilderness,
The splendour in the temple ; Temple, rock,
City of refuge ! Branch and root, and vine !
Tree, too, of Life, of knowledge ! Almond tree
First flowering from the wintry world of death ! —

Thou too the olive, whence distils the oil
Of inspiration for the elect anoint! —
Robe, sceptre, crown, and shield! Eye, arm, and
head! —

Earth's corner stone and architect of Heaven! —
Fire, fountain, river! Sacrifice for sin,
And Sin itself! The serpent of the saved,
The Angel of redemption, and our GOD! —
Curse trans-essentiate into blessing! Man,
Angel, and Deity! The All in all,
The one sole Being of the universe!
The Lord of armies, and the Prince of Peace,
Whose humblest follower is a prince with GOD! —
Our fellow-heir and our inheritance,
Witness and Judge, and ransom and reward,
Originator, Mediator, Fine!
For Thou art all of these, and Thou alone! —

KNOWLEDGE.

THE knowledge of GOD is the wisdom of man —
This is the end of Being, wisdom ; this
Of wisdom, action ; and of action, rest ;
And of rest, bliss ; that by experience sage
Of good and ill, the diametric powers
Which thwart the world, the thrice-born might discern
That death divine alone can perfect both,
The mediate and initiate ; that between
The Deity and nothing, nothing is.

The Atlantean axis of the world
And all the undescribed circumference,
Where earth's thick breath thins off to blankest space
Uniting with inanity, this truth
Confess, the sun-sire and the death-world too,
And undeflected spirit pure from Heaven,
That He who makes, destroying, saves the whole.

The Former and Re-former of the world
In wisdom's holy spirit all renew.

To know this, is to read the runes of old,
Wrought in the time-outlasting rock ; to see
Unblinded in the heart of light ; to feel
Keen through the soul, the same essential strain,
Which vivifies the clear and fire-eyed stars,
Still harping their serene and silvery spell
In the perpetual presence of the skies,
And of the world-cored calm, where silence sits,
In secret light all hidden ; this to know —
Brings down the fiery unction from on high,
The spiritual chrism of the sun,
Which hallows and ordains the regnant soul —
Transmutes the splendid fluid of the frame
Into a fountain of divine delight,
And renovative nature ; — shews us earth,
One with the great galactic line of life
Which parts the hemispherical palm of Heaven ;
This with all spheres of Being makes concord
As at the first creation, in that peace,
Promotional, præelemental, prime,
Which is the hope of earth, the joy of Heaven,

The choice of the elect, the grace of life,
The blessing and the glory of our God.

And — as the vesper hymn of time precedes
The starry matins of Eternity,
And daybreak of existence in the Heavens, —
To know this, is to know we shall depart
Into the storm surrounding calm on high,
The sacred cirque, the all-central infinite
Of that self blessedness wherein abides
Our God, all kind, all loving, all beloved ; —
To feel life one great ritual, and its laws,
Writ in the vital rubric of the blood,
Flow in obedience and flow out command,
In sealike circulation ; and be here
Accepted as a gift by Him who gives
An empire as an alms, nor counts it aught,
So long as all His creatures joy in Him,
The great Rejoicer of the Universe,
Whom all the boundless spheres of Being bless.

THE END.





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